

Remarks

The Examiner's attention to the application is noted with appreciation. Claims 1-23 remain pending. Claims 1, 7-14, 17, and 21 are amended.

The specification is amended to correct all the various typographical errors identified by the Examiner, and to better harmonize reference numerals used in the drawings with those used in the text. No new matter is added.

The Examiner objected to the drawings because the reference numeral "15" does not appear in Figs. 1 and 1a consistently with the usage of that numeral in the text. The Examiner also objected to the drawings because reference characters "5," as shown in Figures 1 and 1a, and "15", as shown in Figure 2, have both been used to designate a "roller."

The objections to the drawings are overcome by amendment. Fig. 1 and Fig. 1a are amended to replace the reference numeral "5" in those figures with the reference numeral "15." Replacement drawing sheets are attached, in which the drawing reference numeral "15" designates the roller in Figs. 1 and 1a. Please replace the original drawing sheets with the replacements provided. The substitution of the replacement sheets is believed to overcome all the objections raised in paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 of the Office Action.

Paragraph 5 of the Office Action objected to the disclosure on the basis of various minor informalities. The specification has been amended to implement the Examiner's suggestions, and the objections to the disclosure are believed to be overcome. All occurrences of reference numeral "5" have been changed to "15" to be consistent with the drawing figures, as amended.

All the claims were objected to, in paragraph 6 of the Office Action, due to sundry informalities. The claims have been variously amended to overcome the objections. Claims 1 and 11 are amended to provide an antecedent basis for "first end" (in lieu of "top end") in claim 11. Claim 8 is amended to provide a more explicit antecedent basis for the term "ascending liner" as used in claim 9. Claim 9 is amended to provide more clearly an antecedent basis for the monitored "tension" recited in claim 12. Claims 14 and 21 are amended to clarify the use of the term "surrounding material." The dependencies of claims 9 and 10 are amended to more clearly and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as his invention.


Claim 17 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, ¶ 2, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as his invention. Claim 17 has been amended to add a step, whereby a characteristic of the surrounding material is calculated from a gross flow rate. Support for this limitation is found in the specification at, for example, page 19, line 5, through page 21, line 7. Hydraulic conductivity is one of the characteristics that may be derived from the gross flow rate data (see claim 20). As amended, claim 17 is believed to be allowable.

Claim 10 was provisionally objected to on the grounds of double patenting. The Examiner noted that claim 10 is a substantial duplicate of claim 7. Claim 10 has been amended to correct its dependency. As amended, claim 10 depends from claim 9. Claim 9 also has been amended to adjust its dependency, and now depends from claim 8. Claim 8 depends from claim 1. By the amendments to claims 10 and 9, claim 7 is no longer an intermediate claim to claim 10, and the double patenting objection is overcome.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the reconsideration and allowance of the claims, as amended, is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment: Two drawing replacement sheets

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Amendments to the Drawings

The attached two sheets of drawings include changes to Fig. 1 and Fig. 1a. The first sheet, which includes Fig. 1, replaces the original sheet including Fig. 1, and reflects the change of label numeral “5” to label numeral “15”. The second sheet, which includes Fig. 1a, replaces the original sheet including Fig. 1a, and reflects the change of label numeral “5” to label numeral “15”.

Attachment: Two replacement sheets